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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

Reports submitted by States parties under article VII of the Convention

Addendum

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC 1/

[8 November 1985]

The Syrian Constitution stipulates as follows:

Freedom is a sacred right. The State shall guarantee the personal freedom of citizens and safeguard their dignity and security. Sovereignty of the law is a basic principle of society and the State. Citizens are equal before the law in regard to their rights and obligations. The State shall observe the principle of equal opportunities for citizens. Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country. Freedom of belief shall be safeguarded. The State shall respect all religions and shall guarantee freedom of all forms of religious observance. Work is the right and also the duty of every citizen and the State shall endeavour to ensure that employment opportunities are available for all its citizens. Every citizen has the right to express his opinion publicly and freely either orally, in writing or through any other form of expression and to participate in the task of supervision and constructive criticism. Citizens enjoy the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration.

1/ The initial, second and third reports submitted by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic (E/CN.4/1277/Add.9, E/CN.4/1353/Add.2 and E/CN.4/1505/Add.10) were considered by the Group of Three at its 1978, 1980 and 1982 sessions respectively.

The Syrian Criminal Code contains provisions that prescribe severe penalties for any action and any written or spoken statement the purpose or result of which is the provocation of confessional or racial bigotry or the incitement of conflict among the various communities and component elements of the nation. It is also a punishable offence for any person to belong to an association established for the above-mentioned purpose.

Accordingly, the Syrian Arab Republic, being committed to its humanitarian, national and Arab course of action and to the above-mentioned provisions, condemns all forms of racial discrimination and supports any convention or international measure for the suppression and punishment of apartheid. Through its audio-visual information media, publications and educational programmes, the State highlights and draws attention to this phenomenon, the reprehensible nature of which is clearly understood and deplored by the Syrian Arab people, as can be seen from the fact that no case involving racial discrimination has been brought before the Syrian courts for many years.

In keeping with these principles, the Syrian Government is engaged in an international struggle in various fields to put an end to zionism and to Israeli rule in occupied Arab Palestine since that ideology and that rule are based on racial and ethnic principles. The Syrian Government is also struggling to put an end to racist rule in South Africa and Namibia and to promcte national liberation in those countries.

It should be noted that most of the transnational corporations operating in South Africa are assisting and strengthening the racist régime in that country through the provision of economic, technical and military support. Accordingly, representations should be made to the countries in which such corporations are operating with a view to controlling their activities in support of apartheid in South Africa. The Syrian Government therefore condemns the actions and conduct of those corporations.